

Comments on "The Gulf After the War"

Your article "The Gulf After The War" (Volume XXI No.11) is a very disturbing piece, not because the recent Gulf War signals a very disturbing development in the North-South conflict, but that the writer/s miss the more essential issues at hand, for instance the U.S. imperialist agenda, instead, the article goes into a lot of hypothesizing which reduces the entire post-war gulf scenario into idle might-have-beens.

The article commits some major errors in logic, analysis and psesuppositions. Most glaring are those in the following paragraphs:

1". ... Accepting an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait would have meant an intact army which could once again be used to threaten US and Zionist interest in the region. Furthermore, it would have made the Soviet Union the peace maker in the Middle East, with considerable political weight in determining the post-war scenario.

"Had Saddam Hussein voluntarily ended his occupation of Kuwait, there would have been tremendous pressure for Israel to leave the Arab lands it had invaded and continue to occupy in violation of UN resolutions. And the creation of a Palestinian state would have to be immediately placed on the agenda. Both U.S. imperialism and Zionism would have been dealt a big blow in the region."

This is a purely hypothetical scenario and ignores facts entirely. There is a bothering assumption here that Saddam Hussein is responsible for the entrenchment of US Imperialism and Zionism. It should be remembered that the U.S. has had a very strong presence in the Gulf even before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and that the American presence in the region is clearly to pursue a complete imperialist agenda: to perpetuate the U.S.-Israeli security scheme against the Palestinians and the other Arab peoples; enlarge U.S. oil interests and control in the Gulf area and the entire Middle East; and to keep down any country like Iraq in a state of political subordination and economic underdevelopment. US imperialism and Zionism will create a Saddam or any pretext to wage a war and to establish hegemony. Also, the Soviet Union, with its sponsored peace plan notwithstanding, cannot have been a major force in the Gulf conflict or its post war. The fact that the Soviet Union went with the U.S. sponsored U.N. Resolution already attests to its inability or unwillingness to go against the wishes of the United States and its Allies.

2." The US victory has greatly diminished the cause of Arab unity. U.S Imperialism cleverly exploited the rivalry of Syria's Haffez Assad and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak with Saddam Hussein and their need for economic benefits from the West, the traditional

enmity of Saudi Arabia and other pro-Western Arab to Iraq, and Turkey's desperate wish to join the European Community to enlist their support in the war against Iraq. Even when the war so clearly went against the intent of UN resolutions, these Arab leaders did not dare to back out of the US-led coalition".

Assad's joining the coalition is a product of cold calculation of it's geopolitical thinking, rather than mere "rivalry" with Saddam. Syria's interest is to consolidate its control and influence in Lebanon, reclaim the Golan Heights, extend its political influence in the Middle East and on the PLO. To a certain extent Assad succeeded. It is wrong to say there is a "traditional enmity" of Saudi Arabia with Iraq. Saudi and other Gulf States consider Iraq as a counterweight to Iran.

The US victory which diminished Arab unity has another aspect there was a popular sentiment and unity among the different Arab groups against US imperialism.

3. " The US can be expected to use ther PLO's support of Saddam Hussein as an excuse to exclude them out of the process or limit their participation . It has the help of conservative Arab States, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, whose inherent hostility to the PLO, muted in the past, has been brought into the open by the war. The traditional supporters of the PLO and the Palestinian movement have 'new ties' with US imperialism, both political and economic, which will prevent them from asserting an independent stand on the Palestinian question."

This is the Western propaganda line to isolate PLO and the Arafat leadership in particular. What should be stressed is the role the PLO tried to play in arriving at a negotiated settlement principally through the mediation of the Arabs. We should also recognize the difficult position of the PLO and point out the injustice and difficult position and the double standard of the UN and the international community vis-a-vis their struggle.

It is inaccurate to say that there is an "inherent hostility" between PLO and the conservative Arab states like Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The PLO doesn't look at their relation this way.

4. "But only the democratic and progressive forces in the Arab world can pose a strong political and moral challenge to US imperialism. The outcome of the war in the Gulf has shown only too clearly that the interests of the Arab people and nations cannot be served by the autocratic elites wghich hold sway in many Arab countries today. And neither can it be served by dictators who because of the very nature of their rule, fail to muster the full moral and political strength of their own ppeople and all positive forces in the world. In the end like Saddam Hussein, they will not be able to effectively stand up to US military might and erode imperialism's political ground for unleashing that might".

It is unfortunate that the article ends with a hard hook against Saddam Hussein and not on US imperialism. This item is uncalled for. It contributes to the demonization of Saddam and implies that it is even justified for US imperialism to take action to topple him.

It would be of greater value if the article on the post-war Gulf situation comes out with sharper analysis of the nature of S.S. imperialism and sharply defining the nature of the contradictions. We should avoid getting drawn into the parameters of bourgeois analysis. We owe it to ourselves and the AB readers to forward and propagate ML analysis. As is the article puts the whole burden and blame on Saddam, implying that his removal will bring about democracy. Rather we should focus on the machinations of U.S. imperialism and keep alive the cries and demand of the Arab/Islamic peoples and the peoples of the world over for the U.S. to held accountable for its crime against the Iraqis and the Arabs in general.